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LIZ TRUSS

RISHI SUNAK

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AND THEN THERE WERE TWO: IT'S DOWN TO SUNAK VS TRUSS

The race to become next UK PM is down to two players, Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, who will battle it out in the run-off

BOOKIES' FAVOURITE MORDAUNT ELIMINATED

Sunak who had topped the last four rounds, emerged on top yet again, winning 137 votes while Truss bagged 113 in the fifth round of voting held on Wednesday. Trade minister Penny Mordaunt, who came second in the last round and had been pollster's favourite to win the Tory leadership race, was eliminated after winning only 105 votes

WILL SUNAK'S FORTUNES CHANGE?

- Though Sunak has led the race so far and his team says he is the best-placed to win it, his fortunes could change if most of Mordaunt supporters in the party now decide to back Truss
- The two are now set for their first head-on clash in a live televised debate scheduled to be held on Monday | PTI

Sept 5
WHEN RESULTS OF THE RUN-OFF ELECTION WILL BE ANNOUNCED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

A protester waves a national flag and shouts slogans demanding the resignation of elected president Ranil Wickremesinghe (R), in Colombo on Wednesday | AP

Fresh protests as Ranil wins president vote

DILRUKSHI HANDUNNETTI @ Colombo

THE Sri Lankan Parliament on Wednesday elected acting president Ranil Wickremesinghe as the country's eighth president by a majority of 52 votes. He will be sworn in on Friday at the Parliamentary Complex in Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, its political capital.

Wickremesinghe's victory yet again showed the vice-like grip the Rajapaksa clan has on power. Despite former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing the country following massive protests, his ruling party managed to get his proxy Wickremesinghe elected as successor, though the latter belongs to a different party that has just one vote in the 225-member parliament.

As for the protesters from GotaGoGama, the anti-government protest venue in front of the presidential secretariat, they vowed to continue their agitation demanding the resignation of the new president.

Wickremesinghe secured 134 votes, Dulles Alahapperuma 82, and Anura Kumara Dissanayake 3. Four votes were declared invalid and two MPs, S Kajendran and Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, abstained.

Speaking after being declared the winner, Wickremesinghe said the country's youth were demanding change and their aspirations should be addressed in carving out a new future while facing the current formidable challenges before the nation.

Analysts see Wickremesinghe's tenure to be the hardest following the total collapse of the island's economy coupled with political instability.

Responding to the election of a new president, the IMF said it would send its team to Colombo to pursue discussions the moment a government is in place. Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since Independence.

Hours after the election, the Indian mission in Colombo said, "we will continue to be supportive of the quest of the people of Sri Lanka for stability and economic recovery, through democratic means and values, established democratic institutions and constitutional framework."

RANIL WARNS OF CRACKDOWN: P12

Bilateral trade in Indian rupee

Sri Lanka is looking at introducing the Indian Rupee as the accepted foreign exchange for transactions, Lanka IOC's MD Manoj Gupta indicated | P7

Speeding ambulance crashes into Shiroor toll booth, kills 4

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S & PRAKASH SAMAGA @ Karwar

IN a tragic incident, an overspeeding ambulance from Honnavar lost control and rammed a toll booth, killing the patient it was carrying and three others at Shiroor in Udupi district. The CCTV footage of the incident has gone viral. The ambulance was on its way to Kundapur when the incident occurred. It was coming from Honnavar with a patient who had cardiac issues.

The patient, Gajanan Ganapathi Naik (45), a native of Hadageri village, about 15 km from Honnavar town, had been admitted to a private hospital. The doctors at the hospital suggested that he should be taken to another hospital in Dakshina Kannada for further treatment should reach the hospital within a specific time. The job to take him to Udupi hospital was entrusted to the ambulance driver Roshan.

In a rush to reach the hospital early and save the life of the patient, the driver was overspeeding and lost control which resulted in the tragedy.

The CCTV footage shows the driver losing control leading to the vehicle turning turtle and rolling over a toll booth cabin.

The impact of the accident was such that the ambulance door opened, throwing out the patient and his two attendants, including the patient's wife. Sensing danger, a toll booth staffer managed to escape. However, another person who was trying to remove the barricade so that the vehicle could pass was knocked down by the ambulance.

The mangled remains of the ambulance involved in the accident

The seriously injured patient Gajanan Ganapathi Naik, his attendants Jyothi Lokesh Naik, Manjunath Naik and his relative Lakshman Naik, Roshan and the toll booth staffer were rushed to a hospital. The attendants and the patient were declared dead. The driver and the toll booth staffer are seriously injured and are battling for their lives.

This is the second such incident at this toll booth. A year ago, a person from Goa driving under the influence of alcohol had rammed his vehicle into the toll booth, killing the security guard.

SPECIAL OPS

Punjab police personnel at the site in Amritsar where two gangsters Jagroop Singh Roopa and Manpreet Singh alias 'Mannu Kusa' — suspects in the murder of singer Sidhu Moosewala — were killed in an encounter on Wednesday | PTI | P10

EXPRESS READ

ZP/TP polls: Report on quota by Friday

Mysuru: The Commission on Delimitation and Political Reservation for OBCs will submit its reports to the Supreme Court on July 22 with regard to the elections to 30 zilla panchayats and 176 Taluk panchayats, which were due in May-June, CM Basavaraj Bommai said. | P4

PSI scam a cobweb, prosecutor tells HC

Bengaluru: Calling the PSI scam a cobweb involving police officers, mediators and tainted selected candidates, the Public Prosecutor informed the Karnataka HC that CCTV footages revealed that the tainted candidates were sitting idle in exam hall attempting only 16-20 questions out of 100. | P4

ZUBAIR GETS BAIL, WALKS OUT OF TIHAR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ALT News co-founder Mohammad Zubair was on Wednesday released from Tihar Jail, hours after the Supreme Court granted him bail in all the FIRs lodged against him in Uttar Pradesh for alleged hate speech.

A bench of justices D Y Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and A S Bopanna said as Zubair was subjected to a fairly sustained investigation by the Delhi Police, there was no reason to put him to endless rounds of custody. "We find no reason or justification for the deprivation of the liberty of the petitioner to persist any further," it said.

The court transferred all the FIRs lodged against Zubair in Uttar Pradesh to be investigated by the Delhi Police. They will be clubbed with the FIRs already lodged by a special cell of the Delhi Police.

The court also disbanded a Special Investigation Team formed by the state government to probe the FIRs.

Refusing Uttar Pradesh government's request to restraint Zubair from tweeting, the bench said, "It's like asking a lawyer not to argue. Whatever he does, he will be responsible in law, but we can't ask a journalist not to write. We cannot stop him from tweeting."

The court stipulated that he be released immediately upon depositing ₹20,000 as bail bond with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at the Patiala House Court. "Immediately upon the presentation of the bail bonds, the Superintendent at the Tihar Jail shall take necessary steps to ensure that the petitioner is released," it said.

Earlier, Zubair's lawyer Vrinda Grover argued that some of the tweets that are being probed by the Delhi Police are also being investigated by the UP Police in different FIRs lodged across the state, adding that the moment a court grants relief to Zubair in one FIR, another one gets activated.

Mohammad Zubair flashes victory sign as he leaves Tihar Jail | PTI

Eshwarappa cleared in suicide case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

UDUPI police, who were investigating a case against former RDPR minister and BJP leader KS Eshwarappa who was facing charges of abetting the suicide of contractor Santhosh Patil from Belagavi, have cleared the former minister in the case. The police filed an 85-page long 'B' report before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bengaluru, which is the special court for cases against elected representatives.

It may be recalled that Patil had written to PM Narendra Modi claiming to have invested Rs 4 crore on building roads in his village in Belagavi based on oral instructions by Eshwarappa. He had asked the PM to direct Eshwarappa to settle his bills. Accusing the minister of cheating him, Patil had alleged that he had to offer Rs 15 lakh in bribe to the rural development department to get paid.

Reacting, Eshwarappa said, "I denied the charges when it were made against me. With the blessings of mother Goddess Chowdeshwari, I got the clean chit and am now free of all the charges".

CAUGHT NAPPING

Microlight crash hushed up, DGCA clueless

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

A microlight aircraft crash-landed on Saturday a few seconds after take off. The accident was hushed up and not reported to the Director General Civil Aviation (DGCA) or the police, the fire authorities or the Karnataka government as mandated by law. What is worse is that the pilot and the owner clandestinely dismantled the aircraft and cleared it. The matter has now come to the notice of the DGCA which has launched an inquiry. DGCA Deputy Director V Narayan said, "Please give us details available with your newspaper regarding the incident."

Strangely the Government Flying Training School (GFTS) authorities claimed they did not know anything about it. Basava Reddy, Secretary, GFTS claimed ignorance about the incident. According to law, no aircraft can be removed from the Jakkur aerodrome without the permission from GFTS.

The blue-coloured microlight, with registration number VT-UMJ was attempting to take off on a sortie at 10.30 am on Saturday and within seconds crash-landed. The right wheel veered off as the aircraft taxied off the runway, an eyewitness said.

Karnataka opposes TN's claim on Mekedatu in SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

OPPOSING the construction of a reservoir at Mekedatu across the inter-state Cauvery River, the Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday submitted before the Supreme Court that the dam will "severely impact" the water flow coming to the state. "They (Karnataka) are proposing to impound some water at a place called Mekedatu, which according to us will severely impact the amount of delivery of water to us at Biligundlu," senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Tamil Nadu, said.

He said Tamil Nadu is a lower riparian state and if the water flow is obstructed, it will affect the delivery of water to the state.

However, the Karnataka government refuted claims made by its neighbouring state. The Karnataka government told a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar that the reservoir project is to come up within the state and there is no question of impacting in any manner the water flow as directed by the apex court.

After hearing arguments, the bench posted the matter for hearing on July 26 and issued notice on the application filed by Tamil Nadu.

JAB-O-METER July 19 **23,89,774 doses**
TAKE YOUR SHOT July 20 **26,59,951 doses**
TOTAL: 2,00,83,18,108

KARNATAKA	JULY 19	JULY 20
Fresh cases	15,520	20,512
Recoveries	16,113	18,507
Deaths	25	40

TAMIL NADU	JULY 19	JULY 20
Fresh cases	1,151	1,470
Recoveries	1,214	1,229
Deaths	0	0

EXPRESS INTAKE

Bommai taunts Shivakumar on Chief Minister remarks | P4

After C'garh, K'taka to buy gomutra from farmers | P4

Henley Passport Index ranks India 87th globally | P9

Cheetah to arrive in India by August 15 | P9

NCLT admits bankruptcy plea of BoI against FRL | P13

DISCONTENT BREWING IN YOGI 2.0

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

AMID the stench of corruption, rumblings of discontent have started emerging from within the Yogi 2.0 government barely four months after it was sworn into office.

While Dinesh Khatik, junior minister of Jal Shakti, announced his resignation in a huff on Wednesday, Cabinet minister for PWD Jitin Prasada is said to be fuming over punitive action against his officer on special duty (OSD) and five other senior officials after a probe report confirmed irregularities in his department and corruption in transfer and posting of engineers.

Prasada's OSD Anil Kumar Pandey was sacked on Monday. He is Prasada's Man Friday, having been with him since he was a Union minister in UPA II. Also, five senior officers of the department were suspended.

Khatik, a two-time MLA from Hastinapur, sent his resignation letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, alleging he was a victim of bureaucratic indifference. He complained that officials at the level of principal secretary neither listened to him nor informed him about meetings and other developments as he belonged to a Scheduled Caste.

Khatik also flagged corruption in departmental transfers and postings. He went on to allege that the prestigious Namami Gange project was mired in corruption.

As for Prasada, sources said he met Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday to complain about the sacking and sought time from Amit Shah to apprise him on the matter.

For the record though, Prasada rejected claims of discontent saying he was working under Adityanath who had the policy of zero tolerance to corruption. "In case of anomalies, action is imperative," he said.

W Ghats as buffer zone: 'Secret' draft underway

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

WHILE many politicians are up against a recent notification issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change over declaration of sensitive areas in the Western Ghats, the forest department is quietly preparing a draft to declare a 10 km buffer zone around forests where it is still to be implemented, as per the recent directions of the Supreme Court.

The apex court directions have not caught the attention of many so far. Conservationists, however, said it will not go down well with the state government, as some of the Supreme Court directions are quite stern and their practical implementation could be a challenge. Many citizens and activists have already moved the Supreme Court challenging the orders. Hearing the Case Number 202/1995, TN Godhavarman Thirumpad versus Union of India and others, the apex court on June 3, 2022, stated, "In respect of sanctuaries or national parks for which the proposal of a state or union territory has not been given, the 10 kilometres buffer zone as ESZ, as indicated in the order passed by this Court on December 4, 2006 in the case of Goa Foundation and also contained in the Guidelines of February 9, 2011 shall be implemented. Within that area, the entire set of restrictions concerning an ESZ shall operate till a final decision in that regard is arrived at." P5

Agri, monoculture up, forest cover dips in state

A study report of Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystems on pilot ecosystem accounts for Karnataka shows that with an increase in development, agriculture and large-scale monoculture, there has been a decrease in forest cover. The report was released on July 19. P5

Girl dies after swallowing chocolate with wrapper

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

A seven-year-old girl died after she swallowed a chocolate along with its wrapper on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Samanvi. The chocolate along the wrapper got stuck in her throat and she choked to death while being taken to a hospital.

The incident occured near Bavalady of Bijoor near Byndoor. Class 2 student of a private school here, Samanvi was waiting to board the school bus on Wednesday morning, but in a hurry, swallowed the chocolate without removing its wrapper.

Sources said that as Samanvi was crying when she had to go to school in the morning, her mother Supreetha offered her the chocolate to pamper her. The body has been sent for postmortem to Manipal.

Samanvi is survived by her siblings and parents, Karunakar and Supreetha.

Byndoor police have registered a case and are investigating.